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## NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS.

*Pantheism versus the Logic of Reason.*

*Editor of the Journal of Speculative Philosophy :*

Sir:—I have read “Pantheism, or God the Universe,” in the last number of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. I had read previously those to which this article makes reference at its close, and all with the carefulness and interest habitual with me when reading whatever I find from the Editor in the successive numbers of the *Journal*. I am thus induced to send the following very general statements in explanation if not in confirmation of any views of mine taken from my own writings or from other sources.

1. *Empirical à priori Cognitions*.—The old Logic took the form of experience only, leaving the matter to metaphysics as First Philosophy, and thus had nothing to say of *à priori* cognitions. Kant took the human mind as an instrument for putting matter into form, and therein transcended the sphere of the old logic, and so, as *prior* to the ordering of experience by it, he could speak of mind as giving occasion for *à priori* cognitions. The mind itself was a fact given and studied in experience, and thus, when attained in its primitive Intuitions, Conceptions, and Ideas, as the prepared instrument for intelligence, there could of this as of any other instrument be said *à priori* what it could do, and how it must be used. So far as Kant’s philosophy was concerned, the *à priori* knowledge was under experience, and could say nothing *à priori* beyond it. Other intelligences may have quite other forms, of whose knowing nothing *à priori* can be stated.

Fichte sought to know “the knowing,” and Kant’s *noumenon* that must fill his forms was to Fichte of no importance. He puts the common consciousness within philosophic contemplation, to ascertain just what as fact is going on within it. To the unphilosophic, only results are given, while the philosopher gets both process and result, and can then say *à priori* how “the knowing” must be, whether theoretical or practical, since all consciousness common and philosophic is the same. But this *à priori* knowledge is of the common human consciousness, as fact in experience only.

Hegel makes all knowing to be thinking, and his philosophy explores only the world of human thought. What is needed for ascertaining Hegel’s *à priori* knowledge is a comprehensive sketch of what Hegel did. He meant to get out in complete system all human thinking. We need not say whether he himself recognized the controlling inner source and spring of the philosophy, and did not perhaps himself “build better than he knew”; but we can and should find just what Hegel has done, and how he did it. He takes into his service as a fact an analysis of the entire function of human judgment as revealed in its own action. All judgments are made of subject and predicate, and a copula combines these two parts in the one judgment. The subject means the matter, and the predicate implies the form in the judgment. First, he worked out synthetically in the *Phenomenology* the form. He begins with an immediate “this” inclusive of all form, and lets it become “this here” as form in space, and “this now” as form in time, and thence onward through perception and understanding in

common consciousness, into self-consciousness, and thence into the reason as self-consciousness completed. Cutting off at this point much that he had formerly included, he put the thought-activity to circle around into itself, and had all form in human judgments identical in the one thinking self-activity.

On the other hand, he worked up the matter for all judgments in the Logic. He began with pure "being" as universal matter of Judgments, and let the thinking in conscious activity run on according to the necessary method intrinsically controlling the dialectical movement. Pure "being" has all matter present and all form absent. Abstract "non-being" has all form present and all matter absent. They are the two sides of a concept which, conditionally for any judgment, must be joined in the thinking. While standing in their separation neither of them can be a complete thought, but each is indeterminate in its own way. Non-being, "Naught," is not bare "nothing," which would be the absence of both form and matter, but is a necessary complement to the present being. In conscious fact the affirming of being is the negating of non-being, and this negating of non-being is also the reaffirming of being; and this process, passing in consciousness, reveals being determined in a complete judgment. The being and non-being coalesce, and we can intelligently say that the being which had been pure has now become *qualified* being. Being is *quality*; and by like process becomes *quantity* and *measure*, and then passes on to the higher stage of *Essence*, and thence by successive steps to the *Idea*, and so has become Universal Being identical with Universal not-Being; and which is the same in one thought as all matter and all form in one universal judgment.

Moreover, this universal is wholly internal in the thought, but may be externalized, just as universal vision might be thought potentially to be within the organ, and, again, as phased externally in space and time. Internality and externality are complementary counterparts, and may be made to coalesce in judgments as the being and not-being have done. This externalizing of the universal thought opens the occasion for the Science of Nature, by which the thought in nature is freed from negations and becomes the Science of Mind. In this, mind is successively *subjective* in self-freedom, *objective* in social and civil activity, and *absolute* in the one Idea as object in art, in religion, and in philosophy; and from thence it circles into itself in universal and external self-production.

This dialectic process, method, and result, all have their necessity and universality in the generalized form and matter assumed: the form becoming universal thinking in the Phenomenology, and universal thought in the Logic, and capable of *à priori* cognition throughout. Yet is the matter and form the generalized concept solely from human experience. The thinking and judging is restricted to facts found in human consciousness, and the *à priori* knowledge both stands upon and abides within empirical relations.

2. *Inadequate Conceptions of Reason.*—What is taken immediately in sense, the understanding takes as matter and form and thinks into judgments, the matter as subject and the form as predicate. Abstraction and

generalization in species and genera afford occasion for all varieties of judgments which the interests and conveniences of human society require. But when one would know experience itself he must think "in wholes," using concepts that are universal and eternal; this is termed speculation, and deemed to be a work of reason. And yet while thus seeking higher attainments there is but the old process of thinking in judgments employed, and so the reason is but the understanding still attempting to work "in wholes" contrary to its own intrinsic laws. Spinoza has his Universal Substance, Kant has his Ideas of the Infinite and Absolute, Fichte has his posited and representative Ego, and Hegel his Universal Negative. The aspirings here are from the veritable reason, but the executive agency used cannot supply and satisfy. It must work by distinguishing and uniting relatives, and cannot manage "the wholes" it has taken in hand, except as it uses others which are complementary parts and combining the parts in a larger whole. The Universal Substance is matter unformed; the Ideas of Kant, the Ego of Fichte, and the Thought-activity of Hegel, are all form only, and must some way take in matter or there can be no thinking, and the supply when taken can furnish no safe standing for the judgment. Spinoza's Substance gets its accident arbitrarily; Kant's Ideas cannot find any matter for them; Fichte's Ego continually posits and opposits, and can never reach an Absolute; and Hegel's Thought-activity successively works into form the entire abstract being of all Experience, and then turns in to itself, eternally circling in the universal thought, with nothing more to gain. Space is empty externality, and this negated in continuous moments is time. The universal is but the total of empirical thought; life and cognition and will are forms of thinking, and creating can be conceived only as a process and result of interminable thought-activity. The highest judgments must take their subject-matter and receive their predicate form solely from that which has been an abstract from experience, for pure being can imply nothing more than what humanity has once tried on, and then in abstract thought put off. Potentiality to any higher being than the empirical universal must be from a presupposing of what is felt to be needful for attaining the higher judgment, while yet the presupposition can show nothing for its validity. The supposed reason is but an inflation of the old understanding.

3. *The Distinctive Faculty of Reason.*—The common consciousness gives to us what is within it, but cannot reveal how that which it gives has been taken by it. So also the thinking in the understanding is unable to overlook itself and expound its own judging. What we have, then, been heretofore saying must have been attained by some other faculty than any function of thinking in judgments, either syllogistically or transcendently, though as yet we have made no discrimination of it, but have left it wholly unacknowledged. It is the Faculty of Reason, working according to its own exclusive method. Instead, in any way, of a deduction from what is in experience, it is an induction from without, and so a production of somewhat that is wholly new knowledge. It sees in the experience a clear implication of a somewhat that must have already been, or the experience itself had been impossible. It knows the conditions on which alone

experience can be, and with which the experience must be and could not otherwise have been than it is. It is not, therefore, in any sense an arbitrary *presupposition*, taken just because it has been needed; it is a legitimate *prerequisite*, taken because known *à priori* to have been in order to the experience, and in which is the primal "sufficient reason" for the experience.

It is in this way, and only in this way, that we see in place and period that space and time must have been *prior* in order to the places and periods; that force must have been, or bodies could not have been in their places and periods in space and time; that life must have been, or an experience of organic facts could not have been; that a personal Creator must have been, or the human experience of a world of forces and lives and living men could not have been; and that the experiences of the men in one common space and common time could not have been, except as all took the same places and periods from the same forces and lives which filled them. And not alone does the reason oversee the functions of perception and judgment; it moreover thoroughly knows itself, and, by as much as it is reason, can see in itself all reasonable truth. As finite reason, it may know in itself that Absolute Reason also must be, and be also independent Source and Ruler of all that is.

Such faculty of reason man has above all function of judging, and in this is his personality: his empirical *à priori* knowledge, and much more his *à priori* knowledge that is Absolute. But for this, man would feel no need for presuppositions, and only by this faculty distinctively can valid pre-requisites be made of truths that stand beyond all experiment.

4. *Pantheism*.—I quote here a sentence from the article in the *Notes and Discussions*: "The Absolute Idea, the Highest Principle, or God, then, must be this union of life, knowledge, and will, each in its perfection and in such identity that each is the other; so that to know is to will and to will is to know, and so that the immediateness of life belongs to it."—This surely is not Pantheism. I can readily adopt it as expressing my own meaning; I only fail to see how, by any means, it can be reached by any dialectical process developed in abstract thinking.

To abstract and generalize, we begin and consummate the work within human experience, and the highest attainable result is that of all attributes abstracted, and put together in their absence they make universal pure form; and thereby leaving present all subjects together deprived of form, they constitute universal pure matter. Pure form is bare thinking and pure matter is bare being, and the former is potential for universal predicate and the latter capable for universal subject, in a universal judgment. They are also strictly complementary each to each, and each seeks the other, and the dialectical process through its successive steps ultimately completes the judgment by circling into itself and becoming the Idea in its identity, all matter and form, thinking and being, in one. If here we rest, we have the sure Pantheistic Idea alone. God is the Universe and the Universe is God; Subject and Predicate are mutually convertible.

I now quote again: "The world or created universe is not God, but his image, reflection, creation." There is, then, a higher Principle from which

this "image, reflection, creation," has come. There is the Idea in identity, as universal, not only, but Idea of idea with a higher standing, reflecting itself into the universal; and in this Idea of idea there is "the union of life, knowledge, and will, in perfection." But the dialectical thinking-process does not attain this highest principle, for that completed itself in circling within itself in the judgment of the universal. If thinking in judgments be all our knowing, then we can only stand in the universal and presuppose this Idea of all ideas because we need it, yet cannot verify it, and so we have but a supposititious Deity. To know this living, wise, free, personal God of the universe, we must use a knowing higher than thinking in abstract judgments, and take the faculty of Reason instead of the Understanding, which may in the universal infallibly see the prerequisite, that this personal God should be or this universe could not be; and that if He be, the universe must be in order that reason may be satisfied; and in such conditioned result can also see that God made and manages the universe from design and for a purpose. Without Reason validly to *require*, we can only wistfully suppose, a personal living God, with no capability to confirm the supposition.

5. *The Conclusion.*—The attempt to speculate is vain by abstract thinking alone. Speculation seeks an ultimate, and no abstract thinking can reach it. As already seen in the category of the universal, thinking can presuppose but cannot verify; so also is it helpless in all categories. In that of quantity, its greatest may have greater and its least may have less. For it, all wholes are limited, and neither the simple limit nor the unlimited can be thought. It may seek to make the polygon coincide with the circle by multiplying its sides and so diminishing their length; but the ultimate is never reached, for its last is still a limited, and may be less. It may presuppose the coincidence in some way to be made, but thinking cannot verify it.

On the other hand, reason sees that a circle can be described touching the mid-points of the sides of any polygon, and that its circumference is a limit and not a limited, and that the multiplying and so shortening the sides of the polygon may bring a coincidence and the polygon be lost in the circle. It is prerequisite *à priori* that the polygonal sides coincide with the points through the circle's circumference; if not, the ultimate cannot be; if so, the ultimate must be; and when so put, it must have been by design. The reason comprehends the whole case, and what before was unverified presupposition has become an exactly known prerequisite. Abstract thinking must run into absurdities and contradictions, if it be set alone to solve the problems of reason.

Most respectfully yours,

Amherst, Mass., Aug. 10, 1875.

L. P. HICKOK.

*Note by the Editor.*—Our continuation of the discussion of this important theme is deferred for want of space in this number.—ED.

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*Professor Davidson and Professor Vera.*

In our January number we gave the substance of a letter of Professor Vera of Naples in reply to certain strictures of Professor Davidson in a previous number upon his "*Strauss et l'ancienne et la nouvelle foi.*" Early